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SUBJECT: HERAT GOVERNOR TELLS OF ONGOING SECURITY CHALLENGES AND  
PRESSES FOR MORE USG RESOURCES AND ATTENTION

Summary  
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¶1. (SBU) Herat Provincial Governor Nuristani confirmed this week that local trouble-maker Ghulam Yahya Siyashwani's people continue to create security problems, recently kidnapping local government officials in the Pashtun Zarghun district. Governor Nuristani was critical of Afghan National Police (ANP) actions in response to these and other criminal activities and took credit for the recent release of individuals kidnapped in January, as well as the return of the body of an Indian citizen killed by Siyashwani's supporters. The Governor also recounted efforts by strongman Mullah Mustafa from neighboring Ghor Province and others in the bordering Cheshte Sharif District of Herat Province to press him to replace the district governor in exchange for peace at the Salma dam site, a major Indian development project. Finally, Nuristani criticized the level of Italian assistance in the province and pressed for increased USG resources and attention to Herat, given its large population and proximity to Iran.

Challenges Continue with  
Ghulam Yahya Siyashwani  
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¶2. (SBU) Supporters of Ghulam Yahya Siyashwani (and most likely the man himself) continue to cause trouble in Herat. According to the Governor, Siyashwani's people recently kidnapped two local government employees in Pashtun Zarghun district; other sources put that number at three employees. Additionally, the Governor confirmed an armed clash between Siyashwani's people and the ANP in Siyashwani's home village. The Governor was critical of the effectiveness of ANP actions, both in that instance and in others. He cited as an example recent ANP seizures of narcotics and explosives that did not include the arrest of the persons transporting them.

¶3. (SBU) The Governor took personal credit for his intervention in the Siyashwani release of the body of the Indian citizen who died while in their custody, and the recent release of two kidnapped staff employed by a local communications company. Five of the seven staff kidnapped in January have now been released, with two security personnel employed by the company remaining unaccounted for. One of Siyashwani's sons, against whom the GIROA had no evidence of wrongdoing, was released in exchange.

¶4. (SBU) In a subsequent meeting the following week, the Governor told the State PRT Rep that he had passed a "personal message" through an intermediary to Siyashwani telling him he was a stupid man, was ruining the lives of his women and children, and that he should join the government while there was still a small chance the Governor could assist him. The message reportedly included a rebuttal to Siyashwani's claim that he was just fighting foreigners, stating that Siyashwani and his colleagues were only prolonging the day when the foreigners could leave. The Governor had not yet

received an answer to his message.

15. (SBU) State PRT Rep briefed Nuristani on U.S. payments of \$50,000 to the relatives of the 13 deceased civilians in the February 17 coalition aerial attack targeting, but apparently missing, Siyashwani. Nuristani indicated that he is prepared to pay the costs of travel for the families of the deceased to meet with President Karzai in Kabul. The meeting has not yet been scheduled since Foreign Minister Spanta had indicated he wanted to participate in the meeting because the families are mostly Kuchis and belong to his tribe, the Taheri. Nuristani noted that when they meet with Karzai, he expected the President to give them 100,000 Afghanis per killed civilian, which has become the President's standard compensation payment for civilians killed in coalition actions.

Pressure from Mullah Mustafa to  
Change Cheshte Sharif Governor  
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16. (SBU) The Governor, who canceled a planned visit last week to Cheshte Sharif district and the Salma dam site due to a last minute airplane malfunction, reported a recent approach by intermediaries for the "three bad guys" in Cheshte Sharif - including Mullah Mustafa, who is from Ghor province but spends some time in Cheshte Sharif district. Mustafa is believed to be behind the recent theft of some World Food Program supplies transiting his area. The intermediaries said the men and their supporters would not make problems at the dam site if the Governor replaces the Cheshte Sharif district governor. Nuristani confided he had already intended to transfer the district governor to another, less problematic district; but that he would not do this as a precondition or under threat from Mullah Mustafa and the other troublemakers of the

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Cheshte Sharif district.

Seeking Greater USG Attention and Funding  
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17. (SBU) Governor Nuristani also highlighted his hallmark project, a province-wide tree-planting campaign which he bragged had reached five million trees planted this spring, a record for any single province in Afghan history he said (Herat city is famous as one of the country's greenest cities). On a more negative note, the Governor complained about the paucity of Italian assistance, mentioning that the PRT and the Italian development agency (Cooperazione Italiana) will each have five million euro to spend this year in the province. He reiterated previous requests that the USG devote more resources and more attention to Afghanistan's second most populous province on the border with Iran, its big neighbor to the west.

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